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United States Department of State
RELEASED IN FULL
Washington, D. C. 20520

April 19, 1994

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INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

S/S

TO: P - Mr. Tarnoff

FROM: INR - Toby T. Gatti

SUBJECT: Peacekeeping Forces in Rwanda

More than half of the UNAMIR force in Rwanda is likely to be withdrawn in the next few days. The Security Council has postponed further discussion on UNAMIR's status. The US would be unable to comply with any UN request to airlift departing UNAMIR forces, as there are no US helicopters in Tanzania, Burundi, or Kenya that could be used for that purpose.

The withdrawal of more than half of the UNAMIR force in Rwanda appears imminent. Belgium's 430-man contingent began to depart Kigali by air Tuesday April 19, according to press reports, rather than overland as previously planned. Belgium is withdrawing its forces unilaterally, although the UN Security Council has reached no decision on UNAMIR's future in deliberations April 18. Remaining UNAMIR forces consist of 490 Ghanaian troops as well as small contingents, each with less than 65 members, from Austria, Brazil, Canada, Congo, Egypt, Fiji, Guyana, Mali, Netherlands, Nigeria, Poland, Russia, Senegal, Togo, Tunisia, Uruguay, and Zimbabwe.

The Security Council has postponed for several days further discussions on UNAMIR's status. In recent meetings, China has proposed keeping UNAMIR in Kigali and possibly even enlarging the force. Nigeria and numerous Non-Aligned Movement adherents support this view. Most members of the Security Council reportedly favor the withdrawal of UNAMIR. Differences of opinion have surfaced however, regarding the advisability of keeping a small staff in Rwanda to facilitate a resumption of peace talks.

Bangladesh is anxious to withdraw its 918-troop contingent before RPF insurgents compel them to surrender their eight armored personnel carriers, six of which are immobilized. Unconfirmed press reports indicate that a company of Bangladeshi engineers also departed Kigali by air today. UNAMIR commander Brigadier General Dallaire reportedly explained that the

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Bangladeshi departure represents a "thinning out of unnecessary forces" rather than the start of a complete UNAMIR withdrawal. The departure of the Belgian contingent and the diminished capability of the Bangladeshi force, will reduce UNAMIR's role to keeping Kigali airport open and perhaps protecting small numbers of civilians fleeing the fighting.

If the UN should request that the US airlift departing UNAMIR forces, there are no US helicopters in Tanzania, Burundi or Kenya that could be used for this purpose. The helicopters that participated in the recent Rwandan evacuation have returned to the USS Peleliu, currently located off the Somali coast, south of Mogadishu. Three KC-130 tankers, deployed to refuel the helicopters aboard the USS Peleliu, remain in Mombasa, Kenya.

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